

# The Brethren Evangelist,

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## Editorial.

### FAULT FINDERS.

Last week we endeavored to point out the inconsistencies and the unreasonableness of the fault finder in the church. There are, however, other fault finders, besides those in the church; the world has its fault finders and *in great numbers too*. Our experience and observation, have taught us these two things: First, that proportionately the world has many more fault finders than the church has. Second, that they are more inconsistent and unreasonable than fault finders in the church.

Every minister of the Gospel and every sincere Christian has had his full share of experience with a certain class of people who are continually pointing out some poor, weakly, half-way Christian, and making him the object of their criticism. The worldly man who loves sin a great deal more than he loves holiness, takes special pride in pointing out the faults and mishaps of some crippled church member. You have observed that it is with an air of satisfaction that these worldly men sit as a jury and bring in the verdict, "Guilty." Indeed they imagine they have done a wonderful thing for God, the church, and humanity, when they discover that some church member has made a misstep or gone wrong. As though it were a real service—a practical service—to discover the weaknesses of some poor struggling church members of whose trials and temptations they know absolutely nothing. These fault finders are out of the church; they have never tried to live a life of holiness; they have never attempted to shape their lives in harmony with the principles of the Gospel; they know nothing at all as to what it means to live a Christian life—a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice—in this world of sin and temptations, in the presence of such unfair, incompetent and unrighteous judges as they are. And yet to hear these people talk, one would think that they are perfectly familiar with the full meaning

of the Christian life. They seem to know just exactly how a Christian ought to live, or at least they would make us believe so. The truth is, as a rule, they know nothing about it. They do not know the Gospel; they do not understand the doctrine of Christ, for how can the carnal mind discern spiritual things? Christ himself taught that it is by *doing his will* that we shall know of his doctrine. Of all the incompetent judges, these worldly fault finders are the most incompetent. How *can* they judge without knowledge? They condemn themselves. They profess to know what is right and what is wrong, and the apostle James declares that to know to do good and not doing it, is *sin*. Under this condemnation they continually rest. Claiming to know to do good, yet not doing it, living in sin, searing their conscience with a "hot iron," these people would sit as judges over those who earnestly strive to do good. Let the Christian rejoice that such is not the character of his judge.

Then again it is to be observed that these people deceive themselves in more than one way. First, they congratulate themselves that they are not hypocrites like these church members, and vainly imagine that they represent the publican and sinner who was justified before God. What deception! He is the true representative of the Pharisee and hypocrite. He stands outside and looks in on these church members and thanks God and humanity that he is not as they are. What is this but the very spirit of the Pharisee? It is remarkable what an aversion these people have for hypocrites; and yet they continually associate with them, and are preparing to spend all eternity with them. Second, they deceive themselves, in supposing that they have a lawful excuse for not joining church, because there are those in the church who fall short of their high calling. It may be true in a few instances where people are out of the church because of inconsistent church members, but as a rule, they are out because they love *sin* rather than *holiness*; they do not want to be governed by those principles which make for purity and holiness. They prefer the sinful pleasures of the world to the heavenly joys of the soul's rest in Christ Jesus. They love darkness rather than light. Third, they deceive themselves because they measure themselves by a false standard. They foolishly imagine that detracting from other's reputation *adds* to theirs. They have not learn-

ed that the faults of others make poor "rounds" for a ladder on which to climb. They are building their character on the faults and mishaps of others. These make a poor, miserable foundation, on which to build, and the day of eternity will reveal the awful blunder. On the day of judgment you cannot hide behind other people's faults. The merits and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer alone, will avail in that day. Let these people measure themselves by the true standard—the Lord Jesus Christ, the model for all men and women, and they will see themselves in quite another light. Get close to *Christ*, and your *own* faults will look larger than those of any church members'.

We conclude with this remark, which should be a solemn warning to the class of people here described. An experience of fifteen years in the Christian ministry has taught us this truth: People who are continually finding fault with church members, who boldly assert that when *they* join church they mean to live as a Christian *ought* to live—these people will either *never join church at all or when they do, they continue chronic grumblers and useless cranks*. This we venture to assert has not only been our experience, but the experience of hundreds of pastors in their labors.

### NOT QUITE VICTORIOUS.

It is well known that for some years the right of women to sit as delegates in the General Conference of the Methodist church, has been a burning question. The clause in the constitution referring to the question was interpreted to mean *men only*, and after a long discussion, the General Conference of 1888 decided that a change in the constitution was necessary to admit women to seats in that body. On this amendment the Annual Conferences have been voting, a *threefourths* vote being necessary to make the change. Out of 10,159 votes, 7,755 were cast in favor of the amendment, and 2,606 against the amendment, lacking 66 votes of the required threefourths. Thus women will not be admitted as delegates to the General Conference of 1896. But this does not settle the question. The majority in favor of admission is too large to make the decision final. The General Conference meets every four years. This makes the next meeting in 1900 when the women will be sure to win. The controversy is simply prolonged, not settled. It is utter-